

Testimony Senate Bill 103

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Wayne RESA

April 16, 2015

Good morning. Thank you Senator Pavlov for the opportunity to address the committee today regarding the very important issue of Educator Evaluation. My name is Paul Salah. I am the Associate Superintendent of Educational Services for the Wayne County Regional Education Service Agency. I have also served in the roles of classroom teacher, principal and Deputy Superintendent in the Wayne Westland Community Schools. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 103 with some recommendations for consideration.

I appreciate the Committee on Education's willingness and commitment to education and the focus upon the improvement of teaching and learning.

Accountability and clear expectations are a cornerstone of any successful organization, schools are no different. A significant body of research exists regarding the use of evaluations and assessments to drive decision making in districts, schools and classrooms. There are several aspects of Senate Bill 103 that I

feel provide districts with the necessary information and tools to adequately evaluate educators.

1. First and foremost, the establishment of clearly defined evaluation expectations helps create a system of accountability which is critical to any successful profession.
2. I agree that student growth should be involved within accountability measures.
3. Increased allowance for local control with regard to the selection of evaluation tools because no one knows the business of schools better than schools is a key aspect of the legislation's strength.
4. Focus upon collaboration between the supervisor and individuals being evaluated is another key.
5. And finally, the allowance for exemption of student growth data for a particular pupil during a school year based upon the school administrator's recommendation.

Each of these examples provides a good basis with which educators should be evaluated and clearly the committee has taken into account some of the best practices related to areas.

I would like to take this opportunity to make some recommendations based upon the research related to student growth.

1. The legislation calls for establishing **clear** approaches to measuring student growth using relevant data. The issues

of student growth begins here...Researchers argue that current assessments designed at state levels or on a standardized basis do not adequately, consistently or fairly measure student growth due to the hundreds of extraneous factors that impact student achievement.

2. Page 14 of Senate Bill 103 calls for the use of student growth and assessment data, which include value-added measures and also calls for **research-based** measures to determine student growth. The quandary however is that outside of formative assessment, the research is unclear about the use of standardized assessments, value added measures and state level data. This is especially true because growth has not been defined and no consistent data sets exist.
3. Educators should be encouraged to use **formative assessment** methods when measuring student growth.
4. Because we do not yet have proven methods of measuring student growth it would be my recommendation, at this point, not to weigh the student growth percentage more than 25%.
5. Administrator evaluation (p. 20) should consider the use of the professional standards that exist on a national level for administrators, not heavily or exclusively upon pupil attendance or the evaluation processes used by administrators to evaluate teachers.

Overall, researchers like Rick Stiggins, in his work *Defensible Teacher Evaluation*, argues that in order to weave student growth into the evaluation process, we must:

1. Be specific regarding the achievement standards, in other words, we can't measure every standard every year.
2. Standards must align with and sample the range of the teacher's normal instructional responsibilities.
3. Standards must be accompanied by a detailed assessment plan and high quality assessments
4. Assessment must be conducted in a pre-posttest manner, state assessments do not accomplish this task
5. Educators should be given the opportunity to describe factors, positive or negative that influenced results.

Again, I want to thank you, for the opportunity to address the committee and I hope that you will consider some of the factors I mentioned this morning. **I believe that student growth can and should be used as a factor when evaluating educator performance, but we must be thoughtful in our processes.**

Also, if State assessment must be used, clear, fair and realistic metrics should be defined and measured related to growth prior to their use.

Attached to my testimony is a copy of the belief statements developed by Wayne County's Student Growth Committee and

endorsed by the Wayne County Superintendent's group. We are beginning to seek options as a county for addressing the student growth question, but we recognize in order to create valid and reliable rubrics it will take time.

Thank you.

**Wayne County
Student Growth Committee**

Belief Statements

We believe:

- educator evaluation first and foremost will be used as a growth mechanism designed to continuously improve teaching and learning
- educator evaluation serves as a primary impetus for change in instructional practice and continuous improvement
- establishing a culture of continuous improvement is important to student learning
- contributions to student learning beyond the academic core is important to overall student learning and success
- a collaborative environment focused on teaching and learning drives the professional development opportunities that will positively impact students

